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NORTH SPOKANE CORRIDOR NEWSLETTER



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Tentative Dates for the Next Public Involvement Opportunities South of the Spokane River

Over this coming year, we will be holding public meetings to update you and gather input on the progress of the design south of the Spokane River. The following is a list of the anticipated meetings:

October 2002

Informal Open House I-90 to Spokane River portion. The Open House will be held October 15 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Spokane Community College.

November/December 2002

Stakeholder meetings for property owners south of the river specifically impacted by the NSC project.

February 2003

Design & Limited Access Hearing

Funding

House Bill 2969 and Senate Bill 6347 (Referendum 51), passed by the Legislature in 2002, if approved by a vote of the people will provide funding (\$207 million) for the US 395 North Spokane Corridor (NSC) project. These funds will finance the construction of the portion of the NSC from Hawthorne Road to Wandermere. Construction of the NSC creates a balanced transportation facility that includes park and ride facilities and provisions for alternative mode use.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Will the North Spokane Corridor (NSC) create sprawl?

The NSC exists primarily inside the Urban Growth Boundary. The NSC will therefore encourage infill of northeastern Spokane. This is compatible with Growth Management and Comprehensive Plan.

The zoning and development of urban residential and commercial land can only be created through the land use actions of the local government entities such as the City of Spokane and Spokane County.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) does not have any land use authority.

I've heard WSDOT is working on changes to the downtown Viaduct. How will this affect the Business District?

Currently WSDOT does not have study funding for Interstate 90 from US 2 to Liberty Park Interchange. However, WSDOT can share our vision and expectations.

Traffic modeling indicates the Viaduct section has adequate through capacity to

serve the region for the next 20 to 25 years. The initial needs to be addressed are the safety and congestion issues related to ramp merges and weave sections. This type of project will require significant input from the public, business district, City of Spokane and other agencies.

This effort would require extensive public involvement and the completion of all necessary environmental documentation to present a specific plan to the community once funding is appropriated.

What is Public Involvement?

The continuing avenues of public involvement include: neighborhood meetings, presentations to community organizations, stakeholder meetings, open houses, newsletters, informational letters, Internet, and e-mail Q & A.



Many public comments are generated from these avenues. Each comment is investigated. If comments prove to be an overall benefit to the planned facility, they are incorporated into the design.

Why not encourage alternative transportation modes?

This project embraces multimodal transportation options by including a corridor for light rail and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, creating a full-length bicycle/pedestrian facility, and park and ride lots.

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WSDOT has set a transportation vision with the NSC project to help meet existing and future transportation needs. Our vision is to improve regional transportation, while benefiting the community it serves.


What is the timeline for the southern portion of the NSC?

Once funding is available, construction would begin in six to twelve years, with property purchases (and relocations) beginning two to five years in advance of construction.

If your property is one that is needed for the corridor, WSDOT has created an early acquisition list topped by people with hardships such as medical and financial, who would like to be considered to be purchased when funding becomes available. If you would like to be put on that list, please send a request letter to Tim Golden, WSDOT Real Estate Services Manager, 2714 N. Mayfair St., Spokane, WA 99207.



Title VI Notice to Public



It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin and sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For Title VI complaint forms and advice, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator at 1-360-705-7098.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format - large print, Braille, cassette tape, or on computer disk, please call Washington State Telecommunications Relay Service (TTY) at 1-800-833-6388, or Tele-Braille at 1-800-833-5385, or Voice at 1-800-833-6384, and ask to be connected to (360) 705-7097.

PROJECT UPDATES

I-90 to the Spokane River

Design Modifications Continue South of the River
Design modifications for the portion of the NSC from I-90 to the Spokane River is nearing its final stages. Minor adjustments to the design will continue until the Design/Access Hearing anticipated in February 2003. The development and selection of the design proposal south of the river was based on the overall reduction of environmental impacts, improving traffic operations, lowering construction costs, and public input.

- Modifications that are now part of the project include:
- Lowering the collector-distributor roadway at the Thor/Freya interchange to reduce noise and visual impacts to the adjacent neighborhood
 - Realigning I-90 to the north from Liberty Park to Thor/Freya to avoid high cost utility relocation on the south side of I-90
 - Relocating Your Place Park which is currently on Second Avenue just east of Altamont Street
 - Adding frontage roads in the vicinity of the Sprague Avenue Interchange to improve access to and from the Valley for the neighborhood east of Havana Street
 - Development of Pedestrian/Bike Path from Second Avenue to the Spokane River

Environmental Documentation
In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we are evaluating the project design refinements to ensure that they are consistent with the scope and nature of the environmental impacts identified in the 1997 Final Environmental Impact Statement. This reevaluation document also addresses changes in regulations since the acceptance of the original document and looks at noise, air quality, traffic analysis, community impact, land use, natural resources, visual quality and other areas to ensure consistency and concurrence. This document will be submitted to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval.

Neighborhood Meetings to be Scheduled
In preparing for the Design/Access Hearing, WSDOT will be conducting several meetings for property owners south of the river, specifically those impacted by the NSC project, to discuss the impacts the design proposal presents. These meetings are intended to be held in small, localized groups so that everyone has an opportunity to have their questions answered and hear Department staff describe the February

2003 Hearing process and real estate acquisition process. Letters will be mailed to the property owners two to three weeks prior to the meetings.

Spokane River to Wandermere

Hawthorne Road to US 2 Vicinity – Grading
Construction on the first contract of the North Spokane Corridor is complete. The excavation and construction of the embankment for the freeway and ramps has been completed. Crews finished the installation of the fence and the slopes were seeded this fall. This portion of the North Spokane Corridor is located between Hawthorne Road and Market Street and Farwell Road. The bridges and paving in this area will be completed under a future contract.

Farwell Road to US 2
The design work for the next construction contract will include lowering Farwell Road from US 2 to Cherry Street to allow the NSC to cross over. This work will also include the construction of the four bridges over Farwell: northbound NSC, southbound NSC, the off-ramp from the NSC to northbound US 2, and the on-ramp from southbound US 2 to the NSC. Depending upon the choices made by the voters this November, Referendum 51 funds could be made available for the purchase of right of way and construction of this segment of the project beginning in 2003.

Lincoln Road and Hawthorne Road
The portion of the NSC between Lincoln Road and Hawthorne Road was designed taking into account unstable soil conditions. The Design and Limited Access Hearing for this realigned section was held on July 18, 2002. The project team is now reviewing the comments and developing responses for inclusion in the Findings and Order/Design Summary.

Questions or Comments:

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click on “North Spokane Corridor”

Corridor Vision

The proposed North Spokane Corridor (NSC) is a 60-mile per hour, 10.5 mile limited access corridor. In addition, the facility includes approximately 3.5 miles along Interstate 90 (I-90), that links I-90 and US 395 at Wandermere. This project will provide major improvement in safety and mobility of motorists and freight within and through metropolitan Spokane. The NSC will provide a major link between the United States, Mexico and Canada. In 1997 a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was approved by the Federal Highway Administration, with a Supplemental FEIS approved in September 2000 for the area from the Spokane River north to US 395 at Wandermere.

- Need:**
- Safety: Currently there are only two north-south trade routes through Spokane – both are on surface streets that run through neighborhoods, past schools and parks.
 - Freight Mobility: Reduction of trade barriers (NAFTA, GATT, CFTA) creates expanded freight transport between Canada, the U.S., and Mexico.
 - Environmental: Improvement in air pollution. (Spokane metropolitan area considered a non-attainment area for air quality.)
 - Motorists: Provides an improved transportation facility that significantly reduces travel time in a multimodal corridor (right of way set aside for future light rail).

- Project Benefits:**
- The US 395 corridor carries over 3.7 million tons, valued at more than 5.5 billion dollars, of NAFTA commodities annually through Spokane.
 - Gas savings – estimated 1.7 million gallons of gas annually.
 - Improves air quality by reducing regional emissions by 2.4 million pounds of CO each year.
 - Improves safety by an estimated 22 million dollars per year in societal costs from accident reduction.
 - Creates an estimated 750 jobs here in Washington and 1250 jobs per year nationwide.
 - Encourages alternate transportation options by providing park and ride lots, pedestrian/bicycle trails, and reserving space for light rail.
 - Reduces travel time by an estimated 2 million hours each year, computing to a dollar savings of approximately \$28 million.
 - Attracts motorists off local arterials reducing traffic through neighborhoods.
 - 1997 random survey throughout Spokane County showed 84% support of the North Spokane Corridor project, compared to a similar survey in 1973 with support of 57%
 - Support from: Congressman George R. Nethercutt, Jr., Spokane Area Legislators, Spokane City Council, Spokane Area Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of Transportation – Province of British Columbia, Inland Northwest Associated General Contractors of America, Community Colleges of Spokane, Pend Oreille County Public Utility District, Bemiss Neighborhood Council, Spokane Mayor John Powers